

Memorial honors Desert Storm's fallen

By Linda D. Kozaryn
American Forces Press Service

GREENSBURG, Pa., Feb. 27, 2001 — Thirteen Army Reserve soldiers from this small town 50 miles southeast of Pittsburgh died a decade ago, and people across America gave what they could to ensure these citizen soldiers are not forgotten.

Some 470,000 active-duty U.S. troops served in Operation Desert Storm along with nearly 217,000 reserve component members called to active duty. There were 148 battle deaths and 145 nonbattle deaths. Nearly 470 servicemembers were wounded in action.

Today, a monument stands at the Army Reserve Center here to honor some of the citizen soldiers who deployed to the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm. Private citizens donated money and local contractors furnished materials and labor to create a Desert Storm memorial honoring the 14th Quartermaster Detachment.

"Money for the monument came in from all over," recalled Jack Gordon, 99th Regional Support Command spokesman. "Some people sent an envelope with a handful of small change."

The 14th Quartermaster Detachment Memorial was dedicated Feb. 25, 1992, the first anniversary of an Iraqi SCUD missile attack that killed 13 members of the Greensburg water purification unit and wounded 43 others.

The SCUD destroyed a makeshift barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, just three days before the fighting ended. In the single deadliest attack on Americans during the Gulf War, the missile killed a total of 28 soldiers and wounded 99. A wreath-laying ceremony here Feb. 25 marked the 10th anniversary of the tragedy.

The names of the Greensburg dead are listed on a bronze plaque on the memorial's back wall. Killed in the attack were Spc. Steven Atherton, Spc. John Boliver Jr., Sgt. Joseph Bongiorno III, Sgt. John Boxler, Spc. Beverly Clark, Sgt. Alan Craver, Spc. Frank Keough, Spc. Anthony Madison, Spc. Christine Mayes, Sgt. Stephen Siko, Spc. Thomas Stone, Sgt. Frank Walls and Spc. Richard Wolverton.

The monument faces east toward Saudi Arabia, a permanent reminder of the ultimate sacrifices made for

the liberation of Kuwait. It was built on the Reserve center grounds rather than in town, Gordon explained, because everyone wanted something "close to home."

"There was a lot of emotion here when the unit left, as there was in every little community when a Reserve unit left for Operation Desert Shield or Storm," he said.

"Right after the incident, someone came and put a temporary monument here out of granite blocks. I think that initially generated the idea for it. They wanted it here.

"This is where they left from, and now in bronze, this is where they've returned."

A memorial service is held each year on the anniversary of the tragedy.

"Soldiers and families come here both publicly on this special day and then privately on their own," Gordon said.

A horizontal granite slab now serves as the base for three vertical granite stones weighing a total of 12,000 pounds. Atop the center pillar stands a bronze bald eagle 54 inches high with a 48-inch wingspan. The Army Quartermaster Corps emblem is etched on the pillar's front along with a quote by Army Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, Desert Storm commander:

"I have seen in your eyes a fire of determination to get this job done quickly so that we may return to the shore of our great country. My confidence in you is total, our cause is just! Now you must be the thunder and lightning of Desert Storm."

Twin bronze plaques on the front of the right and left stones feature the names of the 69 detachment members who deployed to Saudi Arabia. An etching of a female soldier's hands holding a folded American flag is on the rear of the left stone. A map indicating the location of Dhahran and Kuwait is etched on the right stone.

An actual-size bronze casting of the boots, M-16 rifle and helmet, symbolic of the fallen soldier, stands to the left of the monument.

To the right are life-size bronze figures of a man and



Photo by Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service

Pennsylvania officials dedicated the 14th Quartermaster Detachment Memorial on Feb. 25, 1992, the first anniversary of an Iraqi SCUD missile attack that killed 28 U.S. soldiers and wounded 99 — 13 of the dead and 43 of the wounded were members of the Army Reserve detachment. The monument, at the Army Reserve center in Greensburg, Pa., faces east toward Saudi Arabia, where the attack occurred during Operation Desert Storm.

a woman in desert battle dress uniforms, the work of Pittsburgh sculptor Susan Wagner. At the Feb. 25 ceremony, she said her models were an Army Reserve soldier and the best friend of one of the women killed in Dhahran.

After considering several poses, Wagner said, the male soldier kneeled and she knew she had the solemn moment she was seeking to portray. She then asked the woman to stand beside the man and to place her hand on his shoulder to symbolize their mutual support.

Wagner, who has sculpted statues of baseball stars Roberto Clemente and Jackie Robinson, has also been commissioned to do a 12-foot-tall World War II soldier for the 99th Regional Support Command's new headquarters, now under construction near Pittsburgh.

A bronze plaque with the names of all 28 soldiers killed in the SCUD attack is on the wall surrounding the monument. From three poles fly the U.S., Pennsylvania and U.S. Army flags. Thirteen hemlocks, the state tree, stand behind the monument, a living tribute to the 13 fallen Greensburg soldiers.

Feature

Chaplain recounts his fear during Gulf War

By Chaplain (Maj.) Richard Munsell
8th Fighter Wing

In Sept. 1990, I was stationed at RAF Upper Heyford, England. I was on leave and I got a phone call from the base. The caller said, "get back to base as soon as possible, by any means possible." I returned to base on a Friday night, and by Sunday morning at 2 a.m., I was on an airplane on my way to Desert Shield. It happened that quickly.

A year before that I had been thru an Operational Readiness Inspection at Cannon (AFB, N.M.). I think about how dependent I really was on the preparation I had received there. I was a Cold War warrior; I joined at a time when I thought I would never really see war. Then in a heartbeat, I was in it. I remember that anxiety and that shift from this is not peacetime, this is honest-to-goodness real wartime. In addition, when you start putting that together, you could die!

I remember the fear the first time a SCUD launched. Launches occurred at about 3:30 a.m. I slept with my uniform and my boots on so that I wouldn't waste anytime getting to the bunker. In the middle of the night you would hear the alarms go off and over the Giant Voice, "Alarm Red, MOPP-4. Don all protective equipment. This is NOT an exercise." Your heart is pounding thru your chest, and you're grabbing your chemical gear; you're running for your bunker.

I'm in the dark, in the bunker, pulling all my chemical gear out to get up to MOPP 4. I had done all this in an ORI so I knew how to put all the gear on. Here I was putting it on with something real inbound in our direction.

I can remember 'smelling' fear. With the gas mask on, I could smell something inside my gas mask that I had not smelled before. It was something my body was emitting that I could smell inside my gas mask. I don't know what the biological explanation is. I've come to believe that what I was smelling was fear. The closest thing I can describe it was a urine smell that was in my mask. It was something that my lungs or my body was producing that was in my mask. It was most intense the first time. No, I didn't wet my pants. It was the first night of the air war and of the SCUD attacks that I smelled it. I was not afraid to the level of not being able to operate; my mind was working well, my training was kicking in. No kidding. A piece of going to war is fear.

You have to practice the way you would actually do it in war. The difference is war is real. You are not going to die during an exercise; but during a war, people die. You are really glad you practiced it, because that is what you have to rely on when the real thing occurs.

You don't know when the real thing is coming. I didn't know that when I went through an ORI at Cannon that the next time I would be doing this it would be for real.